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211
DIGITAL
EDITION

SPAWN



**VIOLATION
OF
TRUST**
PART 1 OF 2



PREVIOUSLY IN SPAWN

Twitch shares his own supernatural experiences with Rowand, who's having trouble coming to terms with what he experienced.

Spawn discovers the costume has a complete mind of its own, and struggles to get his powers under control. The escaped members of the Old Guard watch on as Spawn fights the symbiote, and question whether to bring the new information back to their bosses or not.

Later, Jim walks in on Twitch and Rowand's conversation. Rowand is surprised and confused, but there's good reason for the interruption. Pieces from Rowand's case in Langley and Jim's past appear as though they connect, and everyone wants to get to the bottom of it.

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HERE'S THE QUESTION WE NEED TO ASK OURSELVES-- AND NEVER MIND THE ANSWER-- THE QUESTION. IN AND OF ITSELF, IS REASON ENOUGH FOR CONCERN--

WHAT WE NEED TO KNOW IS-- WHY, IF YOU'VE BEEN INTERVIEWED BY VARIOUS POLICE AGENCIES ALREADY, HAS THERE BEEN NO RETURN ON ANY OF THE DETAILS YOU'VE GIVEN, OR THE FINGERPRINTS YOU SUPPLIED?

YOU TELL ME.

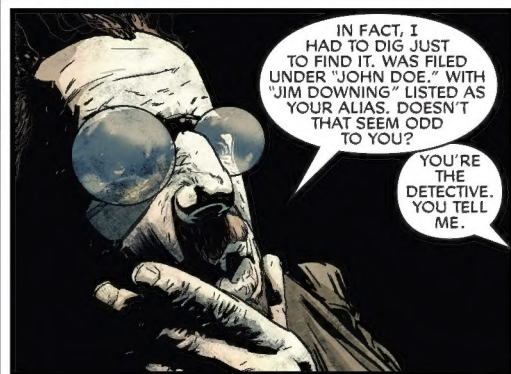
I CAN'T. THAT'S THE PROBLEM.

I CHECKED YOUR FILE IN THE SYSTEM-- GUESS WHAT COMES UP?

JACKSHIT?

SO TO SPEAK-- YEAH.

IT'S ALL BLOCKED. I CAN FIND YOUR NAME AND A CASE NUMBER, BUT THE REST-- IT'S BLACKED OUT. YOUR PRINTS. YOUR WRITE-UPS AND PERSONAL INFO. ALL OF IT.



IN FACT, I HAD TO DIG JUST TO FIND IT. WAS FILED UNDER "JOHN DOE," WITH "JIM DOWNING" LISTED AS YOUR ALIAS. DOESN'T THAT SEEM ODD TO YOU?

YOU'RE THE DETECTIVE. YOU TELL ME.



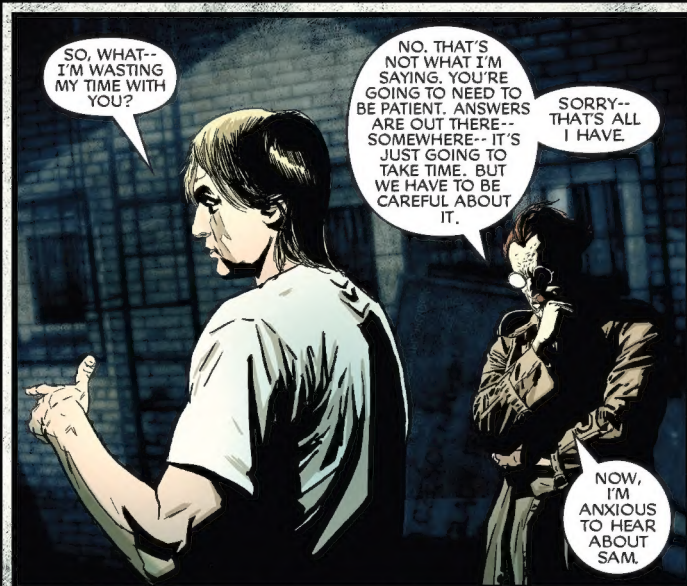
YOU'RE MISSING MY POINT!

THEN GET TO IT.

SOMEONE WITH THE POWER TO MANIPULATE OFFICIAL POLICE RECORDS-- WHICH, I'VE GOTTA TELL YOU, ISN'T AN EASY THING TO DO-- IS TRYING REAL HARD TO KEEP YOU IN THE DARK. TO KEEP YOUR PAST BURIED.

AND NOT ONLY FROM YOU, BUT FROM ANYONE WHO MIGHT COME DIGGING INTO THE MYSTERY OF WHO "JIM DOWNING" IS.







I WAS AFRAID THIS MIGHT HAPPEN.

MEANING?

SAM DIDN'T JUST HAVE A 'NORMAL' HEART ATTACK.

I SHOULD'VE SAID SOMETHING SOONER, BUT I WAS HOPING YOU'D BE ABLE TO HELP HIM WITHOUT CONFUSING THE MATTER.

YOUR CRYPTIC BULLSHIT IS STARTING TO WEAR THIN, SO HOW ABOUT YOU JUST CUT TO THE CHASE.

THEN HERE IT IS... A DEMON-- GOES BY THE NAME OF THE VIOLATOR-- IS WALKING THE STREETS DISGUISED AS A FILTH-RIDDEN CLOWN AND HE'S HAD A SPECIFIC DISTASTE FOR SAM AND I FOR SOME TIME. HE'D BEEN APPREHENDED AND ESCAPED CUSTODY NOT TOO LONG AGO. AND LATER, WHEN I CONFRONTED HIM HE WANTED TO SEND ME A MESSAGE EXPRESSING HIS DISPLEASURE. SO, SAM'S 'HEART ATTACK'-- OR WHATEVER THE DOCTORS WANT TO CALL IT-- WAS CAUSED BY THIS DEMON.



AND I'M NOT SURE OF YOUR PERSONAL HISTORY WITH DEMONS, BUT, I BELIEVE THAT WHATEVER'S WRONG WITH SAM SOMEHOW COMES FROM THE EXACT SAME PLACE AS YOUR COSTUME.

ARE YOU TELLING ME THAT THIS CLOWN AND VIOLATOR CREATURE-- THEY'RE ONE AND THE SAME?



THEY ARE.



THEN YOU TELL ME EVERYTHING YOU KNOW ABOUT THEM.

RIGHT NOW!

TEN MINUTES LATER.





LOOK AT THEM...



GODDAMN VULTURES.



MARC?



ARE YOU-- WHAT'RE YOU DOING UP? IT'S LATE--

I KNOW-- COULDN'T SLEEP.

THEY'VE BEEN OUT THERE ALL NIGHT--

WHO? THE NEWS CREWS?

YEAH. THEY HAVEN'T LEFT SINCE JIM RESURRECTED THAT GUY IN THE STREET,* AND WE BOTH KNOW THEY WON'T LEAVE UNTIL THEY GET SOME-THING.

I EVEN HEARD A BUNCH ARE HERE FROM OVER-SEAS.

SO WHY'S THAT A SURPRISE? YOU DID THE SAME THING FOR YEARS.

*See Spawn #204--Todd



IT'S... IT JUST FEELS DIFFERENT, YOU KNOW? BEING ON THIS SIDE OF IT. HELL-- WE'RE ACTUALLY *THE STORY* THIS TIME.

I THOUGHT THIS IS WHAT YOU WANTED? ISN'T THAT WHAT YOU SAID-- THAT YOU WANTED TO "MATTER?" WELL, NOW YOU DO.

MAYBE. BUT, WHAT ABOUT YOU? AND SARA? JIM'S THE *LEAD STORY* HERE, BUT THE MEDIA MORONS-- THEY'LL TEAR THROUGH ANYONE TO GET THEIR HEADLINE. YOU KNOW THAT!

EASY! I'M NOT THE ENEMY HERE.

SORRY.

DID YOU GET A HOLD OF SARA LAST NIGHT? I FELL ASLEEP WHEN YOU WERE TRYING.



SHE'S STILL NOT ANSWERING.

AND JIM? I DON'T KNOW WHERE THE HELL HE IS, BUT...



THEN CALL THE COPS!

WHAT?

THE POLICE. JUST CALL AND TELL THEM--

TELL 'EM WHAT?



THEY ALREADY KNOW EVERYTHING! THEY'VE GOT TVS TOO! THE NEWS SAID THEY WERE ALREADY LOOKING FOR HIM. THERE'S NOTHING I'M GOING TO SAY THAT'LL MAKE THEM LOOK HARDER.

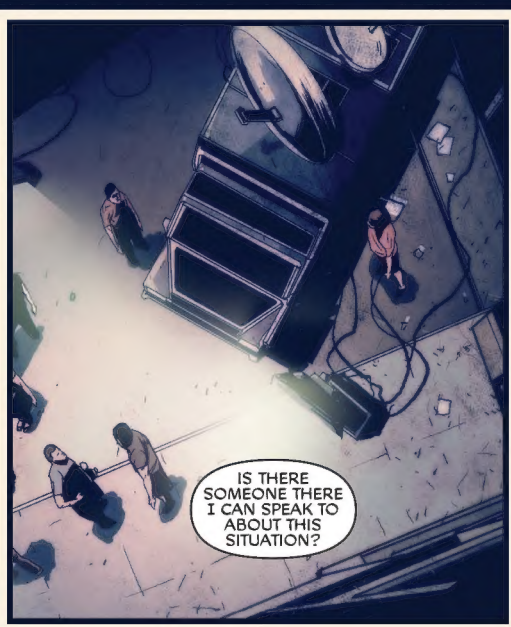
SO, WHAT? YOU'RE GOING TO DO NOTHING THEN? THAT'S STUPID!

JUST PHONE THEM. SEE IF THEY HAVE ANY LEADS ON HIM. IT'S BETTER THAN JUST WORRYING! HERE-- I'VE ALREADY DIALED THEM. IT'S RINGING.



HELLO?

HI. MY NAME IS MARC ROSEN AND I'M A FRIEND-- WELL, ACTUALLY, I'M THE MANAGER OF JIM DOWNING. THE 'FAITH HEALER'. I BELIEVE YOU'RE LOOKING FOR HIM.



IS THERE SOMEONE THERE I CAN SPEAK TO ABOUT THIS SITUATION?



UPDATE More headlines and in-depth coverage of C...com 4:32 AM PT

VIOLENCE HAS ERUPTED YET AGAIN AT A NEW YORK CITY HOSPITAL. WE HAVE CONFIRMATION THAT A SHOOTING HAS LEFT ONE PERSON DEAD, AND AT LEAST ONE LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER INJURED. OTHER DETAILS ARE STILL BEING CONFIRMED.

THERE ARE MULTIPLE REPORTS THAT THERE WAS AN EXCHANGE OF GUNFIRE BETWEEN A PLAINCLOTHES OFFICER AND A FEMALE HOSPITAL WORKER. JUST MOMENTS AGO MEDICS WERE OBSERVED AS THEY WHEELED OUT MULTIPLE BODY BAGS. WE'VE YET TO CONFIRM IF THEY WERE CONNECTED TO THE SAME SHOOTING INCIDENT.

THERE ALSO APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN A BODY TAKEN FROM THE TOP OF A PARKED CAR. ANECDOTAL EVIDENCE SUGGESTS THAT THE VICTIM FELL FROM THE HOSPITAL ROOFTOP. ANY CONNECTION BETWEEN THE GUNFIRE EXCHANGE AND THIS BODY IS UNKNOWN AT THIS TIME, AS IS THE SEVERITY OF THE OFFICER'S INJURIES. WE WILL UPDATE THIS STORY, INCLUDING THE IDENTITIES OF THE VICTIMS, AS NEW DETAILS EMERGE.



I'M NOT *QUITE* READY TO PROCLAIM IT *THE* HOT NEW LOOK, AS HUNKY MESSIAH-OF-THE-MOMENT JIM DOWNING--THE MYSTERY HEALER OF NEW YORK CITY-- HAS ONLY BEEN ON OUR RADAR FOR A SHORT WHILE. *BUT*, HIS *STRIKINGLY* LOW-KEY FASHION SENSE HAS ALREADY STRUCK A CHORD WITH THOSE IN THE KNOW.

ONLY DAYS AFTER MAKING A *HUGE* SPLASH WITH HIS STREET-SIDE REVIVAL OF AN INJURED MEDIA MEMBER, JIM'S TRADEMARK "HAT-AND-SUNGLASSES AFTER SUNDOWN" LOOK WAS ON DISPLAY AT CLUBS ACROSS THE COUNTRY. *ALL* THE COOL KIDS-- FROM HOLLYWOOD'S NEW BREED TO MANHATTAN'S WORTHY ELITE-- WERE DECKED OUT IN THE SAME LOOK, SENDING A CLEAR MESSAGE THAT THOSE WHO WANT TO BE NOTICED WILL BE DOING IT *INCOGNITO*.

ON A MORE SERIOUS NOTE-- JIMMY, YOU MIGHT WANT TO STOP BY THE SCENE OF TONIGHT'S HOSPITAL MASSACRE. IT LOOKS LIKE YOUR MAGIC 'HEALING' TOUCH COULD COME IN HANDY.



DO YOU BELIEVE IT?!!

ANOTHER HOSPITAL ATTACK IN NEW YORK CITY!! VIOLENCE ERUPTED AGAIN THIS MORNING AT THE KAISER HOSPITAL IN UPTOWN MANHATTAN! SO FAR, HOSPITAL ADMINISTRATORS, THE COPS AND THE MAYOR'S OFFICE ARE ONLY WILLING TO SAY THAT "AN INVESTIGATION IS UNDERWAY." *ARE YOU KIDDING ME?!!! WHY* IN GOD'S NAME WILL *NO ONE* TELL US *ANYTHING*? WHAT ARE THEY TRYING TO *HIDE*?

COULD THIS BE *ANOTHER TERRORIST ACT*? ARE OUR HOSPITALS, NURSING HOMES AND MATERNITY WARDS NOW UNDER AN *ALL-OUT ATTACK* BY *AMERICA'S ENEMIES*? THE *RUBBLE* AT ST. ANTHONY'S IS *STILL SMOLDERING*! WHAT'S NEXT? *PRESCHOOLS*? *DAY CARE*?

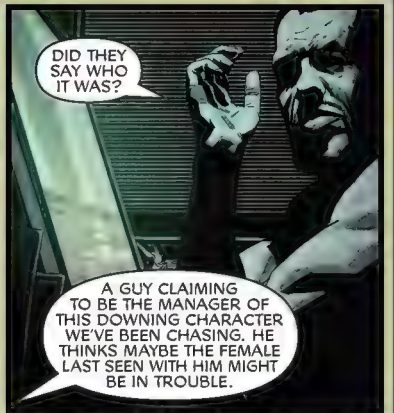
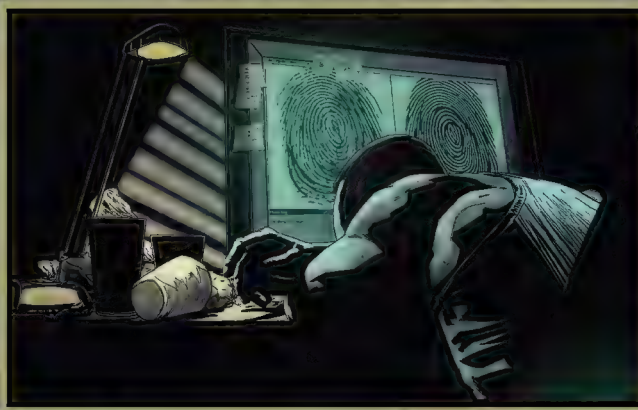
HOW ARE WE SUPPOSED TO PROTECT *OUR CHILDREN AND OUR FREEDOM* WHEN *THEY* WON'T LET US IN ON EVEN THE *TINIEST* DETAIL? A LITTLE BIRDIE TELLS ME *AT LEAST* A DOZEN BODIES WERE REMOVED FROM THE BUILDING. *A DOZEN! OR MORE!!* LIFE IN THIS TOWN IS JUST LIKE SOMETHING OUT OF A *HORROR MOVIE*! *STAY INDOORS! STAY TUNED RIGHT HERE* FOR THE *REAL FACTS* AS THEY *DEVELOP!!*

ELSEWHERE.

CLOWN!!



COME OUT,
COME OUT
WHEREVER YOU
ARE.





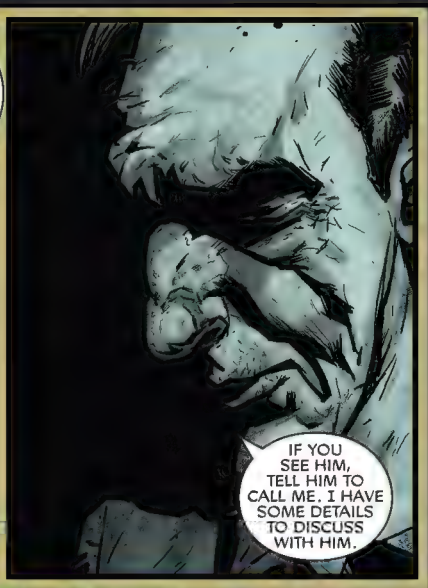
SO, TALK TO HIM AND LET ME KNOW WHAT HE HAS TO SAY. BUT BEFORE YOU GET TOO DISTRACTED, I'M STILL WAITING ON YOUR FULL REPORT ON THE HOSPITAL HOMICIDES.* THE COMMISSIONER'S PUT TOGETHER AN INVESTIGATIVE TEAM THAT'S REPORTING DIRECTLY TO THE MAYOR'S OFFICE.

WE'RE ALL GOING TO HAVE TO BE PLAYING NICE WITH EACH OTHER FOR THE TIME BEING. IN THE MEANTIME-- WHERE'S TWITCH?

NO CLUE. SAW HIM EARLIER-- APPARENTLY YOUR CHIEF NAMED HIM MY PRIMARY BABYSITTER 'TIL ALL THIS MESS GETS CLEARED UP -- BUT HE STEPPED OUT. DON'T KNOW WHERE TO OR WHEN HE'S PLANNING ON BEING BACK.

GUESS I FELL ASLEEP WHILE HE WAS GONE.

*See SPAWN #207--Todd



IF YOU SEE HIM, TELL HIM TO CALL ME. I HAVE SOME DETAILS TO DISCUSS WITH HIM.



HOLD UP! YOU HAVE SOMETHING ABOUT DOWNING OR ANYTHING TO DO WITH MY OTHER CASE, YOU CAN TELL IT TO MY FACE! I'M SITTING RIGHT HERE!

THEN KEEP SITTING! YOU DON'T GET TO SET THE RULES, UNDER- STAND?

AND UNTIL I.A. CLEARS YOU OF ALL WRONGDOING IN THE HOSPITAL BLOOD- BATH, YOU CAN'T HAVE ANY INVOLVEMENT IN THE ONGOING INVESTIGATION. YOU KNOW THAT.

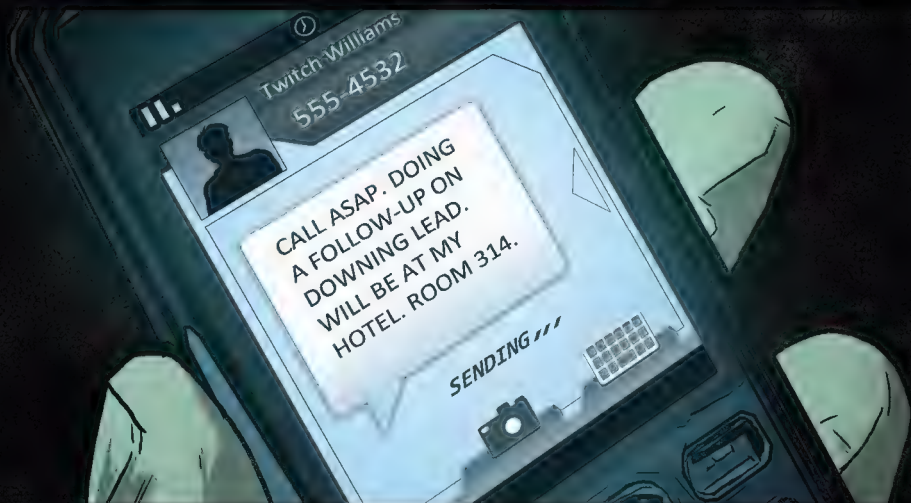
YOU SHOULDN'T EVEN BE SITTING HERE UNSUPER- VISED.

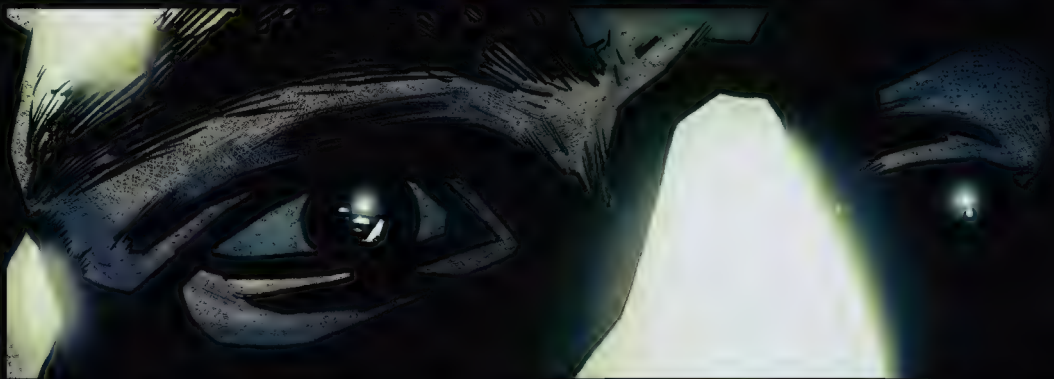


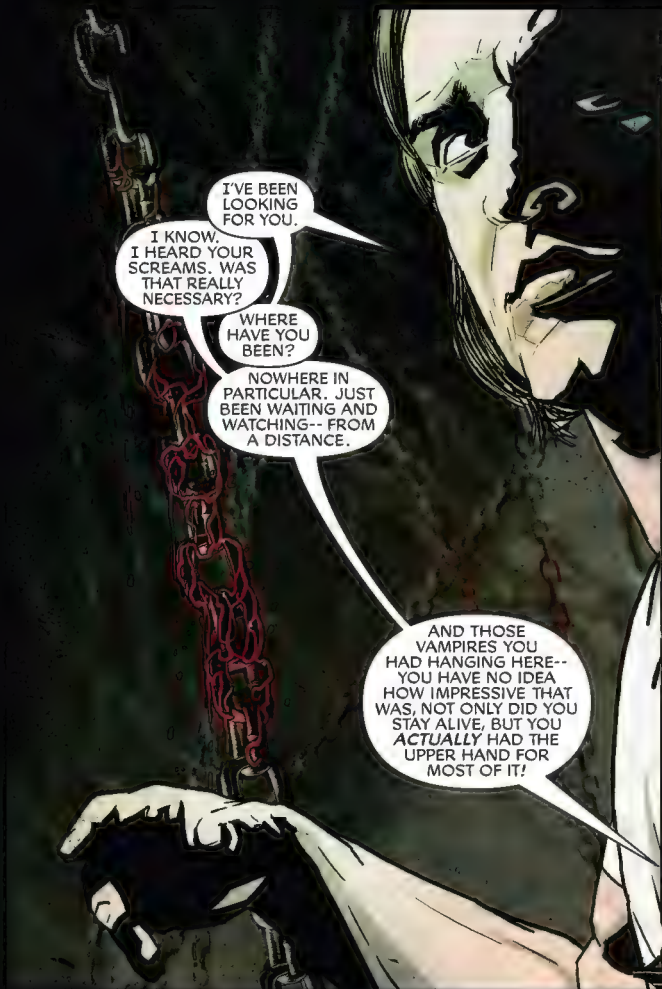
SERIOUSLY? YOU'RE GONNA PULL THAT CRAP ON ME?

I AM! BUT I'D RATHER KICK YOUR ASS AND MAIL YOU BACK HOME TO VIRGINIA. UNFORTUNATELY, SINCE YOU'RE THE ONLY QUASI-WITNESS WE HAVE, I CAN'T DO THAT.

SO, I'LL HAVE TO DEAL WITH THIS SHIT STORM IN A MORE PROFESSIONAL MANNER. PRELIMINARY REPORTS INDICATE THERE'S FLUID ON THE VICTIMS THAT APPEARS TO BE OF A FOREIGN NATURE, WHICH MEANS, I'VE GOT MY HANDS FULL AS IT IS.





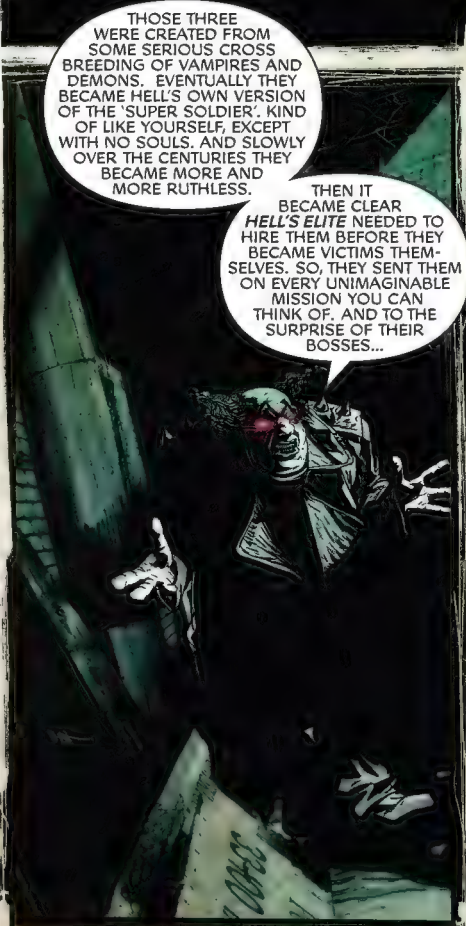


I'VE BEEN
LOOKING
FOR YOU.
I KNOW,
I HEARD YOUR
SCREAMS. WAS
THAT REALLY
NECESSARY?

WHERE
HAVE YOU
BEEN?

NOWHERE IN
PARTICULAR. JUST
BEEN WAITING AND
WATCHING-- FROM
A DISTANCE.

AND THOSE
VAMPIRES YOU
HAD HANGING HERE--
YOU HAVE NO IDEA
HOW IMPRESSIVE THAT
WAS, NOT ONLY DID YOU
STAY ALIVE, BUT YOU
ACTUALLY HAD THE
UPPER HAND FOR
MOST OF IT!

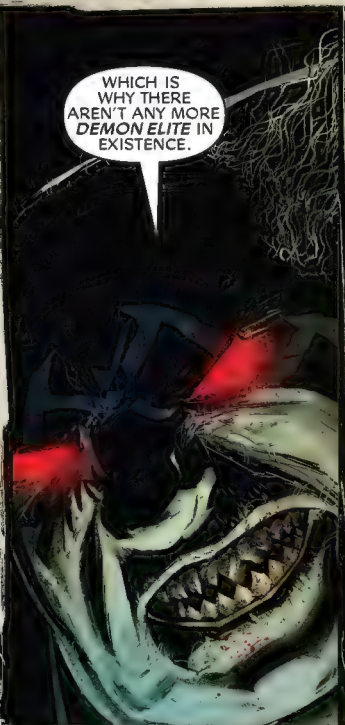


THOSE THREE
WERE CREATED FROM
SOME SERIOUS CROSS
BREEDING OF VAMPIRES AND
DEMONS. EVENTUALLY THEY
BECAME HELL'S OWN VERSION
OF THE 'SUPER SOLDIER'. KIND
OF LIKE YOURSELF, EXCEPT
WITH NO SOULS. AND SLOWLY
OVER THE CENTURIES THEY
BECAME MORE AND
MORE RUTHLESS.

THEN IT
BECAME CLEAR
HELL'S ELITE NEEDED TO
HIRE THEM BEFORE THEY
BECAME VICTIMS THEM-
SELVES. SO, THEY SENT THEM
ON EVERY UNIMAGINABLE
MISSION YOU CAN
THINK OF. AND TO THE
SURPRISE OF THEIR
BOSSSES...




THEY SURVIVED
EVERY MISSION. SEE,
THE ELITE WERE HOPING
THAT THEY'D FAIL ONCE,
JUST SO THEY'D BE RID
OF THEM. BUT THE
THREE OF THEM FOUND
OUT ABOUT THAT.



WHICH IS
WHY THERE
AREN'T ANY MORE
DEMON ELITE IN
EXISTENCE.



SO, IF
YOU'RE
SHOCKED THEY
AREN'T STILL
HANGING IN
YOUR CHAINS...
I'M NOT!



THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT HAS ASSURED US THAT OUR REQUEST FOR "COST CERTAINTY" WILL BE MET, REGARDLESS OF WHAT HAPPENS WITH THE EURO EXCHANGE RATE. PLUS, THEY'VE ACCEPTED OUR COLLATERAL IN THE BOND MARKET. CONTRACTS SHOULD BE IN OUR HANDS EARLY NEXT WEEK.


TOMORROW OUR LOBBYISTS WILL BE MEETING WITH THE REPUBLICAN LEADERS TO REINFORCE OUR POSITION ON THE E.P.A. ISSUES.



ANYTHING ELSE?


WE SHOULD BE CLOSING OUR RECENT ACQUISITION OF THE LITHIUM MINES IN SLOVAKIA IN ABOUT TWO DAYS. THE INTERNATIONAL REGULATORS HAVE GIVEN THE FINAL SIGNOFF ON ALL E.P.A. REQUIREMENTS, WHICH SHOULD HAVE US AT MAXIMUM CAPACITY IN ABOUT THREE MONTHS.

THAT'LL BRING OUR PORTFOLIO UP TO ABOUT 37% IN FOREIGN DIVERSIFICATION--INCLUDING OUR MANUFACTURING INTERESTS.



ON ANOTHER TOPIC, WE RECEIVED A CALL FROM OUR CONTACT AT THE PENTAGON SAYING THERE HAD BEEN SOME INQUIRES INTO A "SPECIAL MATTER" YOU WOULD HAVE KNOWLEDGE ABOUT.

GOOD. DOWNING'S TAKEN THE BAIT.



I WILL FILL YOU IN ON OUR LATEST SHAREHOLDER MEETING ON THE DRIVE TO THE BANQUET TONIGHT, MR. RAMUS.

PICK ME UP AT NINE. WE DON'T NEED TO GET THERE TOO EARLY.

NOW IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME, I'M LATE FOR A MEETING.





ALRIGHT, GENTLEMEN--
WHAT DO YOU
HAVE FOR
ME?



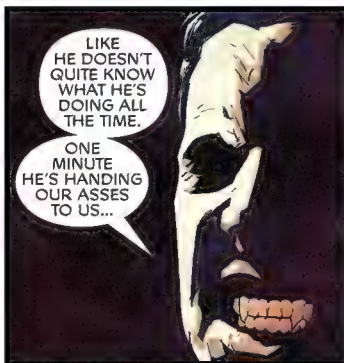
THAT'S
JUST IT, WE
CAN'T TELL
YET.

WHAT'S THAT
SUPPOSED TO
MEAN?

IT MEANS,
BLUDD, THAT YOUR
NEW SPAWN SEEMS
TO BE A LITTLE... um...
INCONSISTENT.



INCONSISTENT
HOW?



LIKE
HE DOESN'T
QUITE KNOW
WHAT HE'S
DOING ALL
THE TIME.

ONE
MINUTE
HE'S HANDING
OUR ASSES
TO US...



...THE NEXT,
HE'S BARELY
ABLE
TO WALK ON HIS OWN.
BUT I'LL TELL YOU WHAT,
YOU WERE RIGHT. WHEN
HE'S ON HIS 'A' GAME IT'S
LIKE HE'S POSSESSED
OR SOMETHING.



ALMOST
AS IF HIS
PERSONALITY IS
CHANGING.
WHAT'S THAT
ABOUT?



THE
COSTUME. IT'S
SLOWLY GETTING
INTO HIS BLOOD-
STREAM.



BESIDES
STRENGTH, DID
HE EXHIBIT ANY
OTHER TRAITS OF
INTEREST?



TRAITS?!

IS *THAT* WHAT YOU'RE CALLING THEM?

WELL OPEN YOUR EYES! HOW MANY OF US ARE SITTING IN FRONT OF YOU? AND BEFORE YOU HURT YOURSELF, THE ANSWER IS TWO! NOW ASK YOURSELF HOW MANY OF US YOU SENT OUT TO DO YOUR 'TESTING' ON SPAWN!

SO HIS 'TRAITS'-- F**CKIN' SWALLOWED OUR BROTHER!! RIGHT INTO THE SHADOWS. HE OPENED A **GODDAMN PORTAL** TO THE ABYSS THEN SLAMMED IT SHUT IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE. SINCE WHEN DID SPAWNS LEARN TO DO THAT? AND MORE IMPORTANTLY, WHY DIDN'T YOU WARN US?



I THOUGHT THAT'S HOW YOU GOT YOUR POWER.



BY KNOWING EVERYTHING!



IF NOT... WHAT GOOD ARE YOU TO US?



I'LL GET YOUR BROTHER BACK-- IF HE'S STILL ALIVE.

BUT IF SPAWN DID WHAT YOU SAID IN THOSE ALLEYS, THEN HE'S JUST EXPOSED THE WHEREABOUTS OF **HEAVEN'S GATEWAY**-- THE DIRECT LINK CONNECTING EARTH TO GOD HIMSELF!

AND WHETHER HEAVEN KNOWS IT OR NOT, THEY'RE ABOUT TO BE **INVADED!**



YOU
LIED TO
ME!

ABOUT
WHAT?

ABOUT
WHO YOU ARE.
YOU'VE BEEN
PLAYING ME!

LET'S GET
SOMETHING STRAIGHT--
YOU'RE THE ONE THAT'S
CLUELESS ABOUT WHO YOU
ARE, **NOT ME!** I KNOW EXACTLY
WHAT I'M DOING. YOUR
PROBLEM IS YOU'RE SO BUSY
CHASING THE PAST YOU'RE
MISSING WHAT'S IN FRONT
OF YOU NOW.



ALL YOU
HAD TO DO
WAS ASK AND I'D
HAVE TOLD YOU
WHAT THE STAKES
WERE FOR YOU
AND I.

I DON'T
WANT TO
LISTEN TO ANY
MORE OF
YOUR LIES!



I DON'T
CARE! JUST
SHUT UP
AND LISTEN.
YOU MIGHT
LEARN SOME-
THING.

YOU'RE RIGHT, I
HAVEN'T BEEN COMPLETELY
HONEST WITH YOU. I'M A DEMON--
AND LIKE YOUR COSTUME, WE BOTH HAD
THE SAME BOSS UNTIL HE DISAPPEARED.*
EVERYONE THAT SERVED HIM THOUGHT HE
WAS DEAD, SO THEY BEGAN TO DO THEIR
OWN THING. WHAT ONCE WAS A TIGHT ARMY
BECAME A SCATTERED BUNCH OF ROGUES.
THOUSANDS OF THEM ARE NOW HERE
ON EARTH-- BUT THAT'S NOT MY
IMMEDIATE CONCERN.

OUR BOSS
IS COMING BACK--
THAT'S THE PROBLEM.
AND SINCE HE'LL BELIEVE
EVERYONE'S BETRAYED
HIM, WHEN HE GETS BACK
TO FULL POWER HE'LL TREAT
US ALL AS HIS ENEMIES.
EVEN THOSE OF US THAT
WERE LOYAL. BUT HE NEEDS
TO COLLECT HIS POWER...
PIECE IT TOGETHER
BEFORE HE CAN BE AT
FULL STRENGTH.

THAT'S WHY
I LIED TO YOU.
BECAUSE I
NEED YOU.

BUT I'VE
STOLEN AND
HIDDEN ONE OF
THOSE PIECES. HE
DOESN'T KNOW THAT
YET, BUT WHEN HE DOES,
HE'LL DESTROY EVERY-
THING AND EVERYONE IN
HIS PATH WHILE TRYING
TO LOCATE IT. SO, YOU'VE
GOT **TWO OPTIONS**,
EITHER FIGHT HIM ON
YOUR OWN OR BAND
TOGETHER WITH
OTHERS.



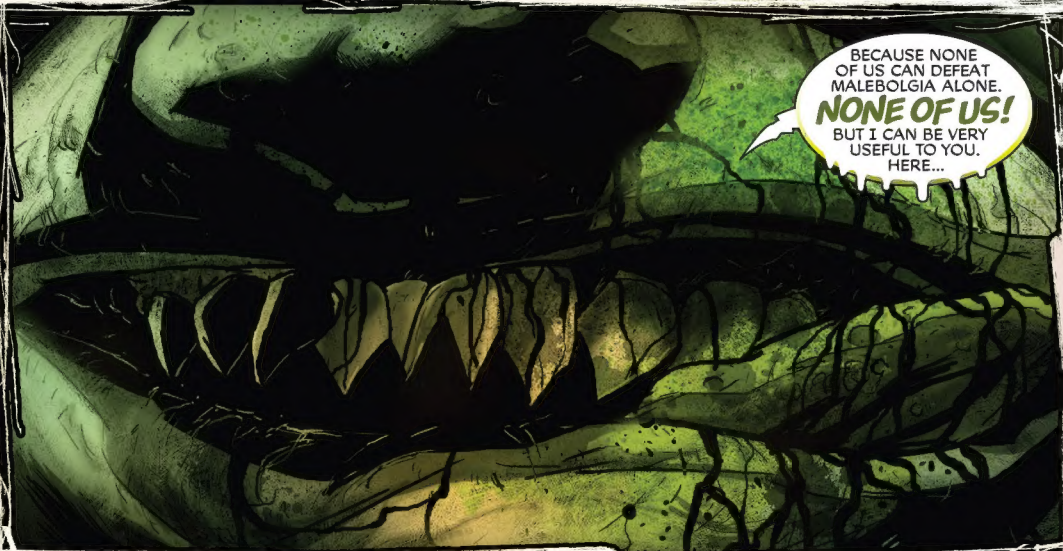


BUT I
DON'T
NEED YOU!!

THEN
WHAT??!
YOU'LL FIGHT
HIM ON YOUR
OWN?

YOU DON'T
HAVE TO LIKE
ME, YOU ONLY
HAVE TO WANT
TO SURVIVE!

BECAUSE NONE
OF US CAN DEFEAT
MALEBOLGIA ALONE.
NONE OF US!
BUT I CAN BE VERY
USEFUL TO YOU.
HERE...



LET ME
SHOW
YOU!!





Tyrant
Lizard
King

EMPIRE